



January 23, 2002

Attorney General John Ashcroft
US Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Mr. Ashcroft:

Three years ago, the Department of Justice found Microsoft to be in violation of antitrust laws. Naturally, suit was brought, and a period followed where the proposed solution was breaking up the Microsoft Corporation. Fortunately, that idea was discarded in favor of a less destructive course of action. A settlement was reached last November under which Microsoft would be allowed to remain intact. It requires a broad range of changes in both policy and product, however, to prevent further antitrust violations and restore fair competition in the technology market.

The settlement, for example, requires Microsoft to provide third parties acting under the terms of the settlement with a license to applicable intellectual property rights. This would allow Microsoft's competitors to build their software into Microsoft's pre-established system without infringing upon those rights. Microsoft has also agreed to refrain from taking retaliatory action if another software producer or computer maker introduces a product into the market that directly competes with Microsoft. This will allow computer makers the freedom to promote their own software without having to risk rebuttal from Microsoft.

I would like to see this case come to a speedy, productive end. I do not believe the settlement is unfair, nor do I believe it would hurt the consumer; in fact, I think the tech industry and the economy have suffered enough already. The suit needs to end, and I believe it is in the best public interest to settle now and allow things to get back to normal. I urge you to give your support to the settlement.

Sincerely,


John Sharp

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